

appreciate the important contributions of their forebears and contemporaries to the development of this nation and American society.

I am proud to stand before you today to salute two outstanding citizens from my childhood home of Waco and congressional district of Dallas. James Andrew Harris was born on March 26, 1932 in Waco, Texas. As a graduate of Houston-Tillotson College in Austin with a chemistry degree, Mr. Harris worked in the Nuclear Chemistry Division of the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at the University of California. There he was part of the team that discovered and identified elements 104-Rutherfordium and 105-Dubnium on the Periodic Table of Elements.

Dr. Otis Boykin was born in 1920 and raised in Dallas. His mother was a homemaker and his father a carpenter. Dr. Otis attended Fisk University and the Illinois Institute of Technology. Unfortunately, his parents could not afford his tuition and he dropped out of college after two years. Thereafter, Dr. Boykin built electrical devices used today in all guided missiles and IBM computers. He also developed a control unit for an artificial heart simulator (pacemaker) that helps millions of cardiovascular patients. Otis Boykin will be remembered as one of the greatest inventors of the twentieth century.

Mr. Speaker, today I am worried that given the current educational settings of our country, future Otis Boykins and James Andrew Harris will not have the opportunity to pursue their dreams or realize their talents.

I want to focus briefly on what is going to happen in my State of Texas. It is reported that at least \$2.7 billion must be cut from Texas public education over the next two years to balance the state budget without a major increase in taxes or fees. The University of Texas at Austin will hire fewer professors, forcing students to scramble for the classes they want. At Texas Women's University, fewer police officers may patrol the campus. Some intercollegiate sports may disappear from Collin County Community College. Tuition will probably rise at Dallas County Community Colleges. Universities, medical schools, community colleges and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board collectively must slash \$343.8 million in the middle of the school year.

Mr. Speaker, one University of North Texas official summarized the current situation very clearly: "The monster came through our door, and now he's sitting on our lap."

I am further concerned as I read news stories, such as a Washington Post article which recently indicated that Oregon is on the verge of cutting as many as 24 days from its school year. The United States ranks 18th among the industrial nations in school year length. How can we expect American schoolchildren to learn in 180 days as much as Korean children learn in 220? They cannot!

Just a couple of weeks ago we listened to President Bush's well-written, well-delivered State of the Union address. Yes, it was nice to hear words about diversity, higher education, making college more affordable, and leaving no child behind. But words are cheap! What has been done to increase the diversity of our populations in higher education? What is being done to make higher education more affordable? And how will we ensure that no child is really left behind in our elementary and secondary public school education system?

Mr. Speaker we should invest in the education of under-privileged young people here at home. It will improve not only our educational system, but our society as a whole. So many Otis Boykins and James Andrew Harris will have the opportunity to revolutionize technology that affects people's everyday lives.

Again, thank you to Congressman CUMMINGS for organizing tonight's special orders.

CELEBRATING THE 140TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION AND COMMENDING ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S EFFORTS TO END SLAVERY

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2003

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 36—Encouraging the people of the United States to honor and celebrate the 140th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and commending Abraham Lincoln's efforts to end slavery. To this end, this legislation serves both to remind us of the tremendous strides this nation has made toward ensuring life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all citizens and to recognize Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States, for his commitment to these ideals.

On September 22, 1862, Abraham Lincoln took a bold step towards eradicating the horrible institution of slavery in this country by issuing a preliminary proclamation, which declared "all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free."

Perhaps the three most significant documents in U.S. history that exemplify America's passion for freedom are the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Emancipation Proclamation. Although each has maintained its rightful place in the annals of American history, only the Bill of Rights and the Constitution have identifiable dates and cultural festivities. Each year, the United States celebrates the Fourth of July, Constitution Day, and Flag Day, all of which have developed into an expression and ceremony of appreciation by the American People with special events emphasizing the historical importance of these significant documents.

However, the Emancipation Proclamation, which is particularly significant to African Americans, has not until recently received its rightful day of national appreciation. With the resurgence of the African American community's celebration of Juneteenth, America is growing in its awareness and appreciation of this highly meaningful document.

Juneteenth, celebrated on June 19, is the name given to emancipation day by African-Americans in Texas. On that day in 1865, six months after the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, Union Major General Gordon Granger read General Order #3 to the people of Galveston. General Order #3 stated "The

people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere."

Large celebrations on June 19 began in 1866 and continued regularly into the early 20th century. In many parts of Texas, ex-slaves purchased land, or "emancipation grounds," for the Juneteenth gathering. One example of this is Emancipation Park in Houston, which was purchased in 1872.

Since this moment in our nation's history, the Juneteenth celebration has spread to the neighboring states of Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. It has also appeared in Alabama, Florida, and California as African-American Texans migrated.

Frederick Douglass once noted, "A [person] who will not labor to gain his [or her] rights, is a [person] who would not, if he [or she] had them, prize and defend them." With this in mind, I want to remind Congress of the labor of individuals of African descent who have devoted their lives to securing a just and prosperous future for all Americans and the duty we have as citizens to make sure their blood, sweat, and tears are never forgotten and our rights are preserved. This legislation helps to further this sense of obligation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. Through your support for this legislation, we are certain to sustain this great legacy of justice and equality upon which this great nation was founded.

HONORING BILLY LEE

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, a longtime friend of mine, Mr. William R. "Billy" Lee, passed away on Friday, January 3rd, 2003, at his residence in Green Cove Springs, Florida. Billy was born in Russell, Florida, on October 28th, 1934, and lived his entire life in Green Cove Springs, Florida, located in my congressional district, Florida's third. A religious man, Mr. Lee was a Baptist by faith, and was a dedicated member of Russell Baptist Church. In fact, Mr. Lee was a former Deacon of the church.

Billy joined the International Association of Machinists in July 27th, 1956, in Local Lodge 1098, in Palatka, Florida. A dedicated union activist, Billy served as the Florida State Council of Machinists Vice President for 10 years before he was elected President in 1998. He served in this capacity until retiring in 1998.

I have always been a devoted friend of the organized labor movement. I have spent a great deal of time here in my 10 years in Washington advocating on behalf of America's working men and women. It has been a privilege for me to be able to work with brave local

labor leaders like Billy Lee, in the pursuit of defending the interests of working Americans. In my 20 years as an elected official—I have never voted against the working men and women in this room. I stand as a proud friend of labor and always will be.

In Billy Lee's time as International Association of Machinists President, he served among those brave leaders on the front lines of the fight to achieve greater worker compensation, improved employee health benefits, social security and pension benefits, and better worker rights. The International Association of Machinists, a large and diverse organization, represents 730,000 members across North America. The Northeast Florida branch, with dedicated Members like Billy, fights to carry out the IAM's union's righteous cause, to stand up against big business and fight to protect the workers of America.

Billy was survived by his wife Joyce, his son Michael Ray Lee, daughter Marilyn Lee, and eight grandchildren. A family oriented man, Billy enjoyed fishing, gardening and particularly loved cookouts. Billy Lee was loved and well respected by everyone that knew him. He will be dearly missed by his family, the community, and by those who fought alongside him in the labor movement.

FOREST RESTORATION AND FIRE RISK REDUCTION ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Forest Restoration and Fire Risk Reduction Act, a bill based upon the collaboration with my colleague and cousin, Representative MARK UDALL of Colorado.

In the 134 million-acre interior West, scientific assessments indicate that in pre-industrial times, 50 to 80 million acres burned per year. In the 1900's, however, fire suppression became federal policy. A century of fire suppression, excessive logging and overgrazing of livestock has led, in many areas, to overstocked forests of second-growth trees. These forests are extremely susceptible to the damaging effects of high-intensity fire.

In terms of resource damage, catastrophic wildfire affects our forest's ecosystems by destroying critical habitat, eroding soil, changing air temperature, moisture content and productivity, while at the same time, facilitating the spread of invasive weeds and non-native plants, and generating air pollution. This matter is complicated further by rising fiscal costs that force the increased population and development of "wildland/urban" interface areas. In recent years, the Forest Service generally has expended \$500–600 million annually in fire preparedness, suppression, and rehabilitation. Within the past last three years, however, over a billion dollars have been spent.

Inseparably related to current forest management practices is the issue of pervasive drought. As we all know, our nation has been suffering from severe drought conditions for several years now, and so far this year proves to be no different. Rain and snowfall in New Mexico and many of our western states is to date far below averages. As a result of the continuing drought in the west, we have also

experienced some of the worst wildfire seasons in modern history. The relatively recent Cerro Grande fire in New Mexico, the Hayman fire in Colorado, and the Rodeo-Chediski fires in Arizona illustrate the severity of the situation. These fires were catastrophic in proportion and inflicted grave environmental, social, and economic impacts on the affected local communities. Consequently, these, and other areas affected by the devastating affects of raging wildfires, face years of restorative efforts and depend upon the development and implementation of a viable fire hazard mitigation program on National Forest System lands to avert such disasters in the future.

In response to these concerns and those I heard from constituents, I have worked closely with Representative MARK UDALL to devise a bill that takes these issues to task. Our "Forest Restoration and Fire Risk Reduction Act" refocuses the implementation of the National Fire Plan (NFP) to areas designated as "wildland/urban interface," the critical zones that are of the highest risk to people, property and water supplies, by redirecting NFP funding and hazardous fuels reduction projects through state selection panels.

A general consensus exists today that thinning our forests—by controlled burns or mechanical means—will lessen the likelihood of unusually severe fires. However, the Bush Administration contends that to facilitate such thinning projects, the environmental laws and procedures for public comment and participation are obstacles that must be removed. I believe that this contention is incomprehensible and conceptually flawed.

The exemption of fire-risk reduction projects from environmental review, public comments and administrative appeals, circumvents established policy of public participation, an important aspect of our democratic process for making decisions affecting public lands. Furthermore, excluding public comment would not assist in developing sound forest management. The bill we are introducing today maintains these sound principles of law and public policy, and makes some relatively innocuous procedural concessions that can expedite the process of resolving appeals.

I anticipate that collaboration between state and federal land managers, and local and tribal communities in both decision and implementation activities may contribute to the development of cost-effective restoration activities, empower diverse organizations to implement activities that value local and traditional knowledge, build ownership and civic pride, and ensure healthy, diverse, and productive forests and watersheds. Such collaboration would result in the efficient restoration of areas distressed by wildfires and help protect our homeowners and businesses from future losses.

I believe, as all of us from the western United States would likely agree, that it is much better to support proactive preventative maintenance programs to reduce fire risks than it is to wait to do something once a fire occurs. We need legislation that will reduce the potential for catastrophic fires and protect our communities, and aid in the restoration of lands that may meet the same unfortunate fate as did those in the Cerro Grande blaze. The "Forest Restoration and Fire Risk Reduction Act" will accomplish these common goals.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF LOUIS L. RAMSAY, JR.

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished constituent and leader in my district, whose professional and civic contributions have helped to shape the business climate in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and throughout the state.

Louis Ramsay, Jr. was born in 1918 in Fordyce, Arkansas, in rural Dallas County. He grew up attending the Fordyce public schools, and went on to earn pre-law and law degrees from the University of Arkansas. After law school, he joined the Law Firm of Coleman and Gantt, where he became a Partner in 1948. For the past 54 years he has been with the firm now known as Ramsay, Bridgeforth, Harrelson & Starling, where he continues to serve as "Of Counsel." He was elected President of Simmons First National Bank in 1970 and served as Chairman and CEO from 1973–1983. He currently serves as Chairman of the Executive Committee of Simmons First National Corporation. He is the only person in the state's history to have served as President of the Arkansas Bar Association and the Arkansas Bankers Association.

Louis Ramsay was recently honored with an induction into the Arkansas Business Hall of Fame, and I cannot think of a more worthy businessman for this distinction. Ramsay has made it a personal mission to use his standing in the business community to better the entire community. He has worked to improve the state's higher education system through service to the University of Arkansas's campuses, including Pine Bluff. He has served as President of the Pine Bluff Chamber of Commerce, the Pine Bluff Rotary Club, Fifty for the Future of Pine Bluff, and countless other organizations aimed at improving the quality of life in the area.

If we can learn one lesson from the exemplary life and career of Louis Ramsay, it is the value of service. He has served the community of Pine Bluff and the state of Arkansas, he has served our country with distinction in World War II as a pilot in the D-Day invasion of Normandy, and he has served his family and his neighbors as well. I thank Mr. Ramsay for his commitment to improving our state, and I congratulate him on this prestigious distinction.

A SALUTE TO THE GREAT LAKES NAVY BANDSMEN

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House Chamber this evening pleased and honored to salute the over five thousand African American musicians who, during World War II, played in the band of the Great Lakes Naval Base in Illinois. These highly talented musicians played an important part in our nation's history and this weekend, many of them